

they present no characters by which the Chatham-Island bones can be generically distinguished from the Mauritian, and that they both belong to the same genus, *Aphanapteryx*, though perhaps they may constitute two species.

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE.

*Wild Spain (España agreste): Records of Sport with Rifle, Rod, and Gun, Natural History and Exploration.* By ABEL CHAPMAN and WALTER J. BUCK. London: Gurney and Jackson, 1893.

No reader will close this book without admitting that it is at least the production of authors who are thoroughly conversant with their subject; and that is a great deal more than can truthfully be said of a large number of works on Spain, many of which are made up of the grumbles or the gushings of the very ordinary tourist, with descriptions—compiled from guide-books—of the principle antiquities and utterly impossible versions of bull-fights. There is no padding of that kind in the present work; no cathedral or picture-gallery is ever mentioned; and it is much if the word “railway” occurs incidentally, although in travelling from the great plains to the south of Seville or the Sierra Nevada—beloved of the ibex—to the snows of the Sierra de Gredos and the trout-streams of Biscay, railways are useful accessories. This sketch of *España agreste*—rural, sport-affording Spain—is redolent of the keen air of the mountains, the indescribable freshness which, even in the heat of summer, is wafted across the *marisma*, and the spicily resin-laden odour of the *pinales*; and, as such, it will commend itself to every true lover of nature. To many of our readers Mr. Chapman is already known by his ‘Bird-life on the Border’—which we noticed favourably about four years ago—and his excellent articles on the ornithology of Spain contributed to ‘The Ibis’; while Mr. Buck has long been a resident at Jerez, and is one of the keenest sportsmen in the Peninsula. And they have shown no undue haste in publishing their experiences, for more than twenty years have elapsed since they commenced those sporting excursions which have extended to the present day and have resulted in the handsome and profusely illustrated work now before us.

Spontaneity and an absence of effort are noticeable features of the book, and another characteristic is the mixedness of its contents, resembling in this respect those *ollas* which are a household word in connexion with Spanish cookery. Sometimes, as in the chapters on the fighting-bull of Spain, brigandage, agriculture, and viticulture (with important observations on crops, horse-breeding, live-stock, the olive, and the vine), the gypsies, past and present, &c., we detect the preponderance of the experienced resident in the person of Mr. Buck; other chapters show joint collaboration, and it

is not always easy to understand which of the partners is speaking in the first person singular; while the notes on bird-life in the *marisma* as well as in the mountains will be recognized as principally due to Mr. Chapman. Most ornithologists are aware that he was the first of our countrymen who obtained absolute proof of the manner in which the Flamingo nests, having waded under a burning sun for long distances through mud and water in order to sketch these wary birds actually sitting on their nests. That the old statement respecting the bird's position astride was an easily explained fable had for some time been the opinion of those persons who had given the matter a thought; but it was Mr. Chapman who proved the correctness of these surmises, and the accuracy of his descriptions have been corroborated by the subsequent observations made by Sir H. H. Blake, when Governor of the Bahamas. Among the happiest of the many illustrations are those relating to the flamingoes, stilts, avocets, herons, ducks, &c., which inhabit the great marshes forming the delta of the Guadalquivir, and known as the *marisma*; while the sketches of birds of prey, both in the plain and on the mountain, leave nothing to be desired. The attitudes of the vultures, whether at their nesting-places, banquets, or on the wing, are admirable; and even should exception be taken to a little hardness in plate xxv., its deficiencies from the artistic point of view may well be pardoned in consideration of the spirit and fidelity with which the evolutions of the assembling vultures are rendered. There is also an illustration of a soaring *Gypaëtus barbatus* carrying a snake in its talons; the bird passed slowly along the line of the sportsmen in the Sierra Bermeja and appeared to have about "four feet of writhing reptile" dangling beneath it. Some interesting particulars are given respecting this handsome species, persistently styled "Lammergeyer" [*sic*] by the authors, who prefer, for some inscrutable reason, a mis-spelt German word to a descriptive English term. As a rule the German name is, even when correctly spelled, somewhat misleading, for the Bearded Vulture, as we prefer to call the bird, feeds chiefly on bones (which it smashes by dropping them from a height), carrion, and—especially in India—the foulest garbage; but there appears to be strong evidence that *during the breeding-season* the bird is destructive to very young kids and lambs: while Manuel de la Torre, of Madrid, whose accuracy is unimpeachable, has actually seen one of these birds kill a rabbit. The above animals, small though they are, would probably be torn to pieces and swallowed on the spot, for we do not think that this species could carry off in its clutches anything exceeding a few pounds in weight. Moreover, *Gypaëtus barbatus* certainly has a way of coming sharply round the edge of a cliff, and that it might frighten or even knock a kid off a narrow ledge we have no doubt whatever; indeed its sudden apparition, when a man is holding on with both hands, is sufficiently startling, and under such circumstances the bird will sometimes sweep past far more closely than at other times; but we never knew it to attack anybody, or to defend its nest even when it had young.

It is impossible to refer to half the interesting points presented by this volume, but the authors' experiences with the ibex of the Peninsula deserve notice, for they are, by far, the most novel feature of the book. This ibex is quite distinct from the *steinbok* of the Italian Alps, and belongs to the group of "turs," or sheep-like goats, found in Southern Europe from the Caucasus westward. No true wild sheep, such as the moufflon, are now known to exist in Spain; and although Mr. Lydekker, to whose authority we bow, has stated that the moufflon was formerly abundant in the Peninsula, we have no knowledge of its existence within historic times further west than the Balearic Islands, and even there it has long been extinct. To return to the ibex: it is still found in some of the deep and remarkably narrow limestone gorges on the Spanish side of the Pyrenees, and in 'Short Stalks' Mr. E. N. Buxton has given a capital account of his experiences with that wily animal in some of its haunts in Aragon, which were practically, we believe, rediscovered by the late Sir Victor Brooke. From the Pyrenees we trace it along the mountains of Central Spain to the Sierra de Gredos, which forms the apex of the watershed between the Douro and the Tagus, and by a continuation of that range—known as the Serra da Estrelha—the ibex enters Portugal. South of this there appears to be a break of continuity, and when the ibex reappears in the Sierra Morena (according to the authors) and undoubtedly in the Sierra Nevada, as well as in the Sierra Bermeja overhanging the Mediterranean, it has varied so far from the northern type, *Capra pyrenaica*, that Schimper considered the differences as specific, and conferred the name of *C. hispanica* upon the southern race. From their practical and consequently valuable experiences of both races the authors are able to give us some useful details respecting the habits and haunts of these animals; from which it appears that in the higher ranges ibex never descend, even in winter, to forests or coverts of any kind; but in the Sierras of Bermeja and Palmitera, which do not exceed 5000 feet in elevation and are clothed to the summit with wood, ibex make lairs in the scrub like those of a roe-deer, and in one drive "wild goat" and wild boar were afoot simultaneously. But both races resort to the narrowest and most overhung ledges on the first alarm.

If we were writing for sportsmen we could dilate upon the chapters on "Deer driving in the Forests," "Wild-fowling in the Wilderness" both with the *cabrestos* or staking-horses and the stanchion guns, the hunting of the grisly boar, trout-fishing in the northern provinces, bustard-shooting, and many other topics; while if we have refrained from saying anything about the wild (feral) camels of the *marisma*, it is because almost every other reviewer has, metaphorically, had a shot at them. But we think we have said enough to give a fair idea of one of the most fascinating volumes which has ever come under our knowledge.